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jc803 U.S. PTO

Patent
Attorney's Docket No. 027557-049

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UTILITY PATENT
APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTER

jc829 U.S. PTO
09/588462
06/06/00

Box PATENT APPLICATION

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Enclosed for filing is the utility patent application of John PHILPSSON and Jim RASMUSSEN for LOUDSPEAKER VOLUME RANGE CONTROL.

Also enclosed are:

- ☒ 2 sheet(s) of ☒ formal ☐ informal drawing(s);
- ☒ a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and/or 365 is ☐ hereby made to filed in on ;
☒ in the declaration;
- ☐ a certified copy of the priority document;
- ☐ a General Authorization for Petitions for Extensions of Time and Payment of Fees;
- ☐ statement(s) claiming small entity status;
- ☐ an Assignment document;
- ☐ an Information Disclosure Statement; and
- ☒ Other: Preliminary Amendment.
- ☒ An ☐ executed ☒ unexecuted declaration of the inventor(s)
☒ also is enclosed ☐ will follow.
- ☒ Please amend the specification by inserting before the first line the sentence --This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §§119 and/or 365 to 9913236.7 filed in Great Britain on June 7, 1999; the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.--
- ☐ A bibliographic data entry sheet is enclosed.



21839

☒ The filing fee has been calculated as follows ☒ and in accordance with the enclosed preliminary amendment:

| CLAIMS | | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | NO. OF CLAIMS | | EXTRA CLAIMS | RATE | FEE |
| Basic Application Fee | | | | | \$690.00 (101) |
| Total Claims | 16 | MINUS 20 = | -0- | x \$18.00 (103) | -0- |
| Independent Claims | 2 | MINUS 3 = | -0- | x \$78.00 (102) | -0- |
| If multiple dependent claims are presented, add \$260.00 (104) | | | | | --- |
| Total Application Fee | | | | | 690.00 |
| If verified Statement claiming small entity status is enclosed, subtract 50% of Total Application Fee | | | | | --- |
| Add Assignment Recording Fee if Assignment document is enclosed | | | | | -0- |
| TOTAL APPLICATION FEE DUE | | | | | 690.00 |

- ☐ This application is being filed without a filing fee. Issuance of a Notice to File Missing Parts of Application is respectfully requested.
- ☒ A check in the amount of \$ 690.00 is enclosed for the fee due.
- ☐ Charge \$ _____ to Deposit Account No. 02-4800 for the fee due.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16, 1.17 and 1.21 that may be required by this paper, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 02-4800. This paper is submitted in duplicate.

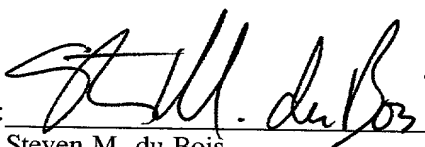
Please address all correspondence concerning the present application to:

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Burns, Doane, Swecker & Mathis, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: June 6, 2000

By: 
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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| In re Patent Application of |) | |
| |) | |
| John PHILPSSON et al. |) | Group Art Unit: Unassigned |
| |) | |
| Application No.: Unassigned |) | Examiner: Unassigned |
| |) | |
| Filed: June 6, 2000 |) | |
| |) | |
| For: LOUDSPEAKER VOLUME RANGE |) | |
| CONTROL |) | |

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 4, 5, 8, 13, and 14 as follows:

Claim 4, line 2, delete "or 3".

Claim 5, line 2, delete "or 3".

Claim 8, line 3, delete "one of claims 1-7" and insert therefor --claim 1--.

Claim 13, line 1, delete "or 12".

Claim 14, line 1, delete "or 12".

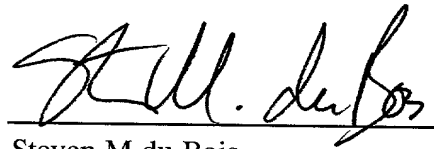
REMARKS

The above amendments to the claims have been made in order to eliminate multiple dependencies. Favorable action on the merits of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

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Date: June 6, 2000

LOUDSPEAKER VOLUME RANGE CONTROL

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The invention relates to loudspeaker volume range control for a telephone, and in particular to providing loudspeaker volume range control for "hands-free" operation of a telephone.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

10 Increasingly, telephones are provided for operation in a "hands-free" operation mode in which an external loudspeaker and microphone replace the built-in earphone and microphone of a telephone handset. As a result, the user is able to hold a telephone conversation without the need to hold the handset.

15 Such hands-free operation has proved very useful, in particular, for example, for telephones provided in motor vehicles to allow a passenger or the driver to hold a telephone conversation while travelling.

20 Previous "hands-free" telephones of this nature have been provided with an echo cancellation system to cancel the echo arising from the pick-up by the microphone of sound emitted by the loudspeaker. This echo can be heard by the user at the other end of the connection and should be eliminated.

25 In known echo cancellation systems the signal applied to the loudspeaker is also supplied to an adaptive Finite Impulse Response (FIR) filter which is provided to model the acoustic path between the loudspeaker and the microphone. The output of the FIR filter, which thus corresponds to the echo signal
30 received at the microphone, is then subtracted from the signal received at the microphone to eliminate the echo. A LMS (Least Mean Square) algorithm based on a comparison of the resulting signal with the signal applied to the loudspeaker is used to adapt the FIR
35 coefficients to an optimum setting.

A "Signal amplification system with automatic

equalizer" based on this principle is disclosed in WO96/32776.

However, if the loudspeaker and the microphone are mounted close together, the distance between the
5 loudspeaker and the microphone is relatively short and the echo signal from the loudspeaker received at the microphone is relatively loud. The uppermost setting of the volume control range may result in a echo signal which is sufficiently large to cause stability problems
10 in the FIR filter or to introduce non-linearities in the signal received at the microphone as a result of an overloading of the A/D convertor, resulting in reduced clarity for the user at the other end of the connection.

15 In addition, it should be noted that for telephones installed for "hands free" operation in motor vehicles generally there is only a small variation in the position of a microphone relative to a user since it is important to ensure that speech from
20 the user is picked up clearly. In contrast, the loudspeaker is positioned in each make of car at a position which is dependent on the styling of the car. As a result, the distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone (or user) is variable. If the
25 loudspeaker is mounted close to the microphone and user, the sound level may be too loud for the user and may cause discomfort.

Alternatively, if the loudspeaker and the microphone are mounted far apart, the distance between
30 the loudspeaker and the microphone is relatively long and the echo signal from the loudspeaker received at the microphone is relatively quiet. In this case even the upper volume setting of the range of settings may be too low so that the loudspeaker signal cannot be
35 heard by the user.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Thus there is a problem with known telephones in that large variations in the relative distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker of a "hands-free" telephone, arising from differing positions of installation of the microphone and the loudspeaker, can result in operational problems owing to a standard loudspeaker volume range.

The present invention seeks to overcome this problem with the known telephones by providing for the adjustment of the volume range of the loudspeaker.

Loudspeaker volume range control arrangements in accordance with preferred embodiments of the invention therefore have the advantage that a useful volume range for the loudspeaker can reliably and simply be made available to the user whilst accommodating a large variation in the relative installation positions of the loudspeaker and the microphone of the telephone.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows a circuit arrangement in accordance with one embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a flow diagram showing the method of the invention;

Figure 3 illustrates the operation of the invention in a first situation;

Figure 4 illustrates the operation of the invention in a second situation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A loudspeaker volume control arrangement of a telephone 1, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention, is shown in Figure 1.

In this telephone, a speech signal received by the telephone is passed to a volume control block 2. The output of the volume control block 2 is supplied to a loudspeaker 3 by way of a D/A convertor 4 and an amplifier 5.

A microphone 6 is arranged to receive speech from the user of the telephone and also receives an echo signal corresponding to the sound emitted from the loudspeaker 3. The microphone 6 is connected by way of a further amplifier 7 and an A/D convertor 8 to a subtractor 9.

The output of the volume control block 2 is also supplied to an adaptive Finite Impulse Response (FIR) filter 10. The output signal s1 of the FIR filter 10 is supplied to the subtractor 9 and is subtracted from the signal received from the microphone 6. The resulting signal is output from the telephone.

A control block 11 receives the signal output from the subtractor 9 and the signal output from the volume control block 2, and is arranged to control the FIR coefficients of the FIR filter 10 based on a comparison, using a LMS (Least Mean Square) algorithm, of the signal output from the subtractor 9 and the signal output from the volume control block 2.

Finally, the FIR filter 10 is connected to the volume control block 2 by way of control line c1.

The echo cancellation system formed by the D/A convertor 4, amplifier 5, loudspeaker 3, microphone 6, further amplifier 7, A/D convertor 8, subtractor 9, adaptive Finite Impulse Response (FIR) filter 10 and LMS control block 11 is known per se, and the operation thereof, which is well known, will not be described in detail.

The operation of the loudspeaker volume range control arrangement of the present invention will now be described with reference to Figure 2.

Firstly, as shown in step 1, the distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone of the telephone is estimated, on the basis of signals of the loudspeaker and the microphone of the telephone.

Secondly, as shown in step 2, the volume range of

the loudspeaker is controlled based on the estimated distance.

5 The operation of a first embodiment of the loudspeaker volume range control arrangement of the present invention, as shown in Figure 1, will now be explained. In this embodiment, FIR coefficients or values derived therefrom are used as an estimate of the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker.

10 As is known, the FIR filter 10 filters the loudspeaker signal to generate an echo estimate signal s1, and the optimum setting of the FIR filter is determined by the LMS control block 11. The FIR filter coefficients are supplied to the volume control block by way of control line c1. The volume control block 2
15 first evaluates the FIR filter coefficients (Step 1 of Figure 2), and then the volume control block 2 controls the loudspeaker volume range in dependence on the FIR coefficients (Step 2 of Figure 2). If the coefficients are large, the volume range is adjusted downward: if
20 the coefficients are small, the volume range is adjusted upward.

Alternatively, the FIR coefficients could be obtained from the LMS control block 11.

25 The FIR filter coefficients can be used in several different ways to estimate the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker. For example, the largest absolute value of the adaptive filter coefficients may be determined in order to estimate the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker.
30 Alternatively, the filter coefficients may summed or averaged in order to estimate the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker. In particular, a weighted average of filter coefficients may be determined in order to estimate the distance between
35 the microphone and the loudspeaker.

Of course, other methods of estimating the

distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker on the basis of the adaptive filter coefficients can be used, and the invention is not limited to the methods outlined above.

5 This embodiment of the present invention exploits the fact that information about the relative positions of the loudspeaker and the microphone can be inferred from the magnitude of the FIR coefficients. Thus, when the magnitude of the FIR coefficients is high, it can
10 be inferred that the loudspeaker 3 is mounted relatively close to the microphone 6. The volume can then be set to extend over a range of lower values to avoid stability problems in the FIR filter 10 and other problems associated with a loud volume in such
15 situations. In contrast, when the magnitude of the FIR coefficients is low, it can be inferred that the loudspeaker 3 is mounted relatively far away from the microphone 6. The volume can then be set to extend over a range of higher values to ensure that the
20 loudspeaker signal can always easily be heard by the user.

A second embodiment of the loudspeaker volume range control arrangement of the invention will now be described. In this embodiment, the ratio or difference
25 between the energies of the loudspeaker signal and the microphone signal is used as an estimate of the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker

In accordance with the second embodiment of the invention, the distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone is estimated based on the relative strengths
30 of the loudspeaker and microphone signals (Step 1 Figure 2) and then the loudspeaker volume range is controlled in dependence on the relative strengths of the loudspeaker and microphone signals (Step 2 of
35 Figure 2).

The operation of the first embodiment of the

invention is illustrated by Figures 3 and 4.

In the situation shown in Figure 3, the loudspeaker is mounted close to the microphone. As a result, the echo signal picked up by the microphone is relatively loud and the coefficients of the FIR filter are relatively large in order to produce a loud echo estimate signal s1. The volume range of the loudspeaker is thus controlled to extend over a lower range.

In the situation shown in Figure 4, the loudspeaker is mounted further away from the microphone. As a result, the echo signal picked up by the microphone is relatively quiet and the coefficients of the FIR filter are relatively small in order to produce a quiet echo estimate signal s1. The volume range of the loudspeaker is thus controlled to extend over a higher range.

Thus the loudspeaker volume range control in accordance with the invention provides a good range of volume settings for the user, in which the maximum volume setting is neither too high or too low, irrespective of the relative positions of the loudspeaker and microphone of the telephone. In addition, impairment of speech quality resulting from non-linear behaviour of the telephone circuit elements is avoided.

CLAIMS

1. A loudspeaker volume range control
arrangement for a telephone having a loudspeaker and a
microphone, comprising means for controlling the volume
5 range of the loudspeaker in dependence on the estimated
distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone of
the telephone based on the signals of the loudspeaker
and microphone of the telephone.

2. The loudspeaker volume range control
10 arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the
telephone includes an echo cancellation system
including an adaptive filter arrangement wherein the
distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker is
estimated based on the adaptive filter arrangement
15 coefficients.

3. The loudspeaker volume range control
arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the adaptive
filter arrangement is an FIR filter.

4. The loudspeaker volume range control
20 arrangement as claimed in claim 2 or 3 wherein the
largest absolute value of the adaptive filter
coefficients is determined in order to estimate the
distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker.

5. The loudspeaker volume range control
25 arrangement as claimed in claim 2 or 3 wherein the
filter coefficients are summed or averaged in order to
estimate the distance between the microphone and the
loudspeaker.

6. The loudspeaker volume range control
30 arrangement as claimed in claim 5 wherein a weighted
average of filter coefficients are determined in order
to estimate the distance between the microphone and the
loudspeaker.

7. The loudspeaker volume range control
35 arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ratio or
the difference between the energies of the loudspeaker

signal and the microphone signal is used to estimate distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone.

5 8. A telephone having a loudspeaker and a microphone and a loudspeaker volume range control arrangement as claimed in one of claims 1-7.

 9. A motor vehicle fitted with a telephone as claimed in claim 8.

10 10. A method for controlling the loudspeaker volume range for a telephone having a loudspeaker and a microphone, comprising controlling the volume range of the loudspeaker in dependence on the estimated distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone of the telephone based on the signals of the loudspeaker and microphone of the telephone.

15 11. The method as claimed in claim 10, for a telephone having an echo cancellation system including an adaptive filter arrangement, wherein the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker is estimated based on the adaptive filter arrangement coefficients.

20 12. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the adaptive filter arrangement is a FIR filter.

 13. The method as claimed in claim 11 or 12, wherein the largest absolute value of the adaptive filter coefficients is determined in order to estimate the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker.

30 14. The method as claimed in claim 11 or 12, wherein the filter coefficients are summed or averaged in order to estimate the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker.

 15. The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein a weighted average of filter coefficients are determined in order to estimate the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker.

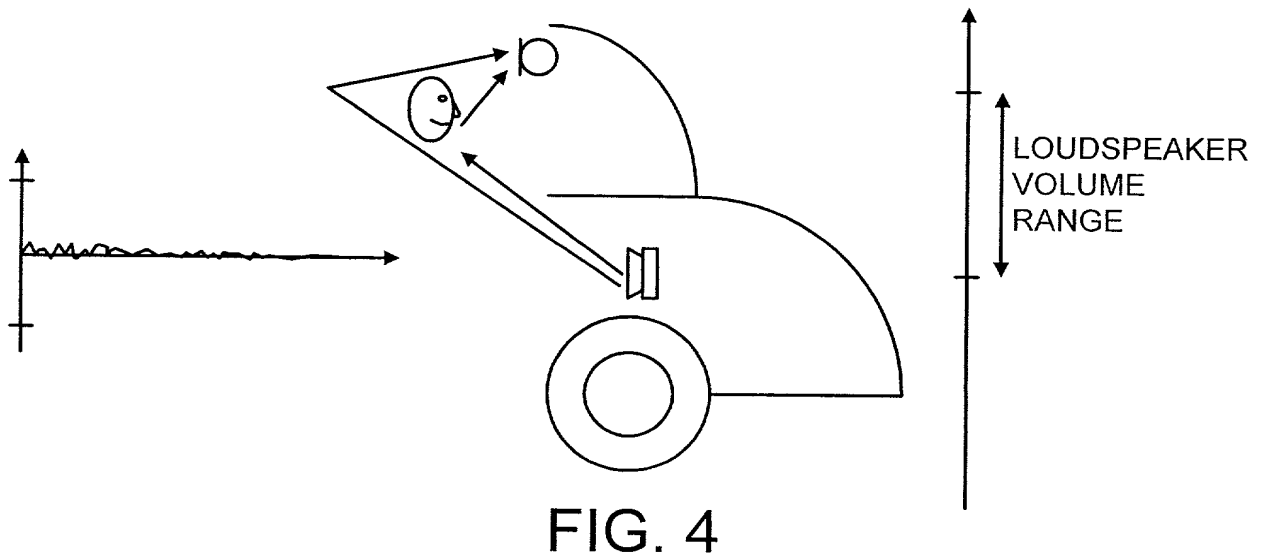
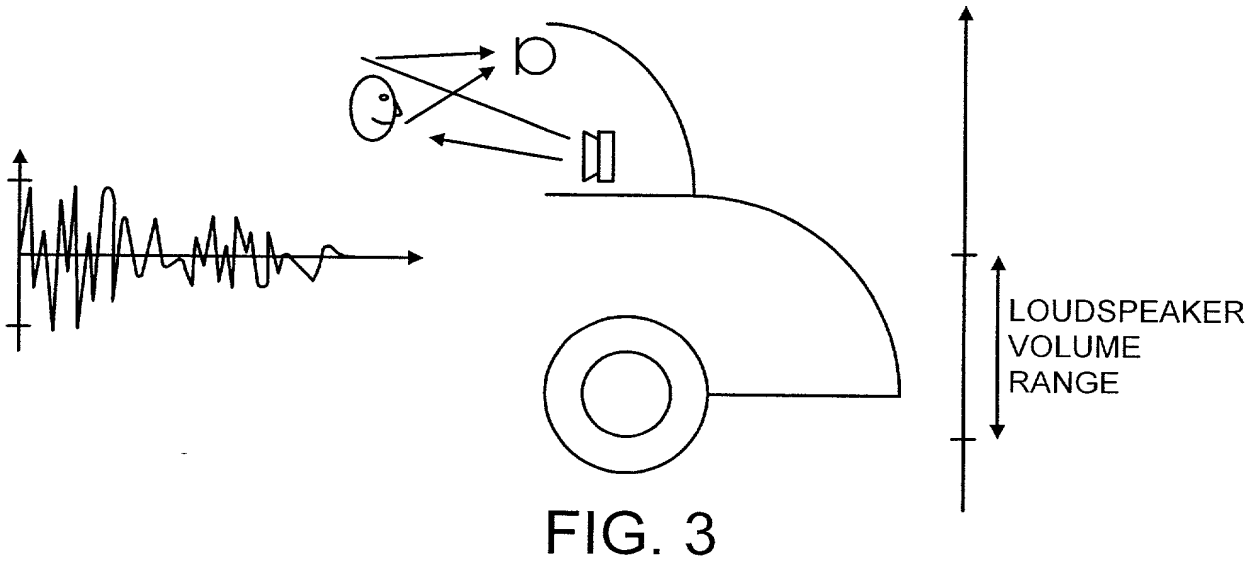
35 16. The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the ratio or the difference between the energies of the

loudspeaker signal and the microphone signal is used to estimate distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone

ABSTRACT

LOUDSPEAKER VOLUME RANGE CONTROL

5 The present invention relates to a loudspeaker
volume control arrangement for a telephone having a
loudspeaker and a microphone which controls the
loudspeaker volume of the telephone based on the
estimated distance between the microphone and the
loudspeaker.



**COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION**

Attorney's Docket No.

027557-049

As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I BELIEVE I AM THE ORIGINAL, FIRST AND SOLE INVENTOR (if only one name is listed below) OR AN ORIGINAL, FIRST AND JOINT INVENTOR (if more than one name is listed below) OF THE SUBJECT MATTER WHICH IS CLAIMED AND FOR WHICH A PATENT IS SOUGHT ON THE INVENTION ENTITLED:

LOUDSPEAKER VOLUME RANGE CONTROL

the specification of which

(check one)

☒ is attached hereto;

☐ was filed on _____ as

Application No. _____

and was amended on _____;
(if applicable)

I HAVE REVIEWED AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE ABOVE-IDENTIFIED SPECIFICATION, INCLUDING THE CLAIMS, AS AMENDED BY ANY AMENDMENT REFERRED TO ABOVE;

I ACKNOWLEDGE THE DUTY TO DISCLOSE TO THE OFFICE ALL INFORMATION KNOWN TO ME TO BE MATERIAL TO PATENTABILITY AS DEFINED IN TITLE 37, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, Sec. 1.56 (as amended effective March 16, 1992);

I do not know and do not believe the said invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my or our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my or our invention thereof or more than one year prior to said application; that said invention was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to said application; that said invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of said application in any country foreign to the United States of America on any application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months prior to said application;

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code Sec. 119 and/or Sec. 365 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate as indicated below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate on this invention having a filing date before that of the application(s) on which priority is claimed:

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

Attorney's Docket No.

027557-049

| COUNTRY/INTERNATIONAL | APPLICATION NUMBER | DATE OF FILING (day, month, year) | PRIORITY CLAIMED |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Great Britain | 9913236.7 | 7 June 1999 | YES <u>X</u> NO <u> </u> |
| | | | YES <u> </u> NO <u> </u> |

I hereby appoint the following attorneys and agent(s) to prosecute said application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and to file, prosecute and to transact all business in connection with international applications directed to said invention:

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|
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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

| | | |
|--|-------------|------|
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